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Charles Major School  
102 East Franklin Street  
Shelbyville  
Shelby County  
Indiana

HABS No. IN-201

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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IND,  
73-SHEV,  
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# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLES MAJOR SCHOOL

HABS No. IN-201

LOCATION: 102 E. Franklin Street  
Shelbyville, Shelby County, Indiana

PRESENT OWNER: Shelbyville Industries, Inc.  
131 E. Washington Street  
Shelbyville, Indiana 46176

PRESENT OCCUPANT: Vacant

PRESENT USE: Not in use at this time.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Charles Major School is within the Shelbyville Commercial Historic District. The historic district is pending National Register approval. The structure is a 2-story brick building constructed in 1922. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the actual significance of the structure. The building on its own does not exhibit outstanding architectural style. In addition, it is not a particularly good example of the institutional architecture constructed during that period.

The building was named after Charles Major, a local writer of childrens' books. A statue depicting a young boy from one of Major's books, "The Bears of Blue River", was placed outside of the main entrance of the school. It has since been moved to the Town Square.

## Part 1: Historical Information

### A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The original building was constructed in 1922; an addition was built in 1949.
2. Architect: Original portion - J. Edwin Kopf & Woolling Architects

Addition - D.A. Bohlen & Sons Architects

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Originally, there were three parcels that make up the property that the school occupies today. They were purchased at separate times, one in 1827 (parcel #16), one in 1852 (#7), and the last one in 1922 (#18).

1827 - Deed April 12, 1927, recorded in Deed Book A, Page 271. John Walker to the Shelbyville Central Schools.

1852 - Deed July 16, 1852, recorded in Deed Book U, Page 10. Willism F. Berry to the Shelbyville Central Schools.

1922 - Deed May 24, 1922, recorded in Deed Book 148, Page 519. Fannie B. Waler to the Shelbyville Central Schools.

1983 - Deed July 12, 1983, recorded in Deed Book 288, Page 874. Parcels 7, 16 and 18. Shelbyville Central Schools to Shelbyville Industries, Inc.

4. Builder, Contractor, Supplier: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction are attached.
6. Alterations and Additions: Addition constructed in 1949 to replicate the original portion of the building. There has been some alteration to the windows on the rear facade, and all of the doors have been modernized. A 2-story arched window and two oriel windows have been infilled on the southwest facade.

B. Historical Context

The school was constructed on the former site of the Shelbyville Seminary. Although the seminary could have remained on the site when the new building was constructed, it was not practical. The seminary was constructed in 1822 with another building added in 1855. The new school building, constructed in 1922, was named after Charles Major, a local author of children's books. The neighborhood surrounding the school is predominantly residential with a mixture commercial and light industrial activity. The residential units are predominantly of wood frame construction and a vernacular style of architecture. There is a railroad line located one block east of the school.

Part II: Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The two-story brick structure constructed in 1922 was originally rectangular in plan. The later addition altered that plan to an irregular shape. The building is not characteristic of any particular style of architecture, although the detailing exhibits some Colonial Revival influence. The building is characterized by an arched stone entryway with a scrolled bracket in the keystone position. Above the door is a simple stone name plate. The first floor windows are connected at the sill by a simple stone string course. Likewise, the second-story windows are connected at the lintel with a stone string course. All of the window bays are recessed. Above the second floor windows are a series of square decorative stone panels. The central section of the main facade is characterized by a brick parapet with a stone balustrade and stone moldings. There are two stone reliefs of a book and torch on the parapet.

2. Condition of Fabric: The general condition of the fabric is good. The building appears to be structurally sound. The entire structure is in need of mortar replacement. Many of the windows have been broken out and the roof is in need of repair.

B. Description of Exterior

The building is an irregular shaped plan (due to the addition). The original structure was rectangular in plan. The structure is 2 stories tall with a basement. It is 17 bays wide with a 5 bay addition.

1. Over-All Dimensions:
2. Foundations: The building is constructed on a concrete foundation.
3. Walls: The walls are brick with stone detailing. The brick is layed in a stretcher bond pattern.
4. Structural System, Framing: The structural system appears to be integral frame and wall material.
5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads: Not applicable.
6. Chimneys: There are two offset interior chimneys.
7. Openings: There is a large arched stone entryway on the front facade. The stone arch is decorated with a bracket located in the keystone position. All of the entryways to the building are recessed. On the southwest end of the building is a large arched opening that has been filled in.
  - a. Doorways - All of the doorways have been altered from the original. The replacement doors are glass with aluminum framing.
  - b. Windows and Shutters - With the exception of 3 windows at the rear of the building, all of the windows are steel sash, 3 over 5 pane, with a 6 pane section that opens out. There are 2 oriel windows and a large two-story arched window located on the southwest side of the building. Three of the windows on the rear of the building have been replaced with casement type windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shsps, Covering - The roof is a flat composition roof. There is a series of brick ventilators with the coverings on the roof.
- b. Cornice, Eaves - There is no cornice on the structure; the building is trimmed along the roofline in stone with a balustrade that extends along the central portion of the front facade.
- c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers - Not applicable.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: See attached floor plans for additional information.
  - a. 1st Floor - The 1st floor is occupied by classrooms, an auditorium/gymnasium area, a teachers' room and library.
  - b. 2nd Floor - The 2nd floor is completely occupied by classrooms.
  - c. Basement - The basement level is occupied by the furnace rooms, boys and girls restrooms, the kindergarten classroom, and a small kitchen.
2. Stairways: There are two stairways located at each end of the building. The stairs from the first to second floor are metal stairs with terrazo treads, and the stairs to the basement are concrete.
3. Flooring: On the first and second levels, the flooring is narrow oak planks. The basement flooring is a combination of concrete and tiles.
4. Walls and Ceiling Finish: The walls are plaster finished and concrete block with some of the hallway walls being half brick and half plaster or half glazed tile and plaster. The ceilings on the first and second floors have been dropped with 2'x4' ceiling tiles.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors - The doorways are all wood framed with the exception of the entryways to the coat rooms. These entryways are large arched openings with saloon-type swinging doors. The classroom doors are wood framed with 2 over 4 glass panes and transoms. The main interior entrance to the building is a wood architrave with pilasters and side lights and a multi-lighted transom.

- b. Windows - There are large interior windows between the classrooms and the hallways. These are wood framed 4 over 4 glass pane windows with wood muntins.
- 6. Decorative Features and Trim:
- 7. Hardware: The building features very simple hardware; there is nothing with particularly distinguished style.
- 8. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating, Air conditioning, Ventilation - There is no air conditioning in the building. The old portion of the building is heated with steam radiators. The addition is heated with gas heaters. The mechanical systems are all exposed on the basement level.
  - b. Lighting - The lighting on the main floor is with fluorescent bulb fixtures. The basement is lit with single incandescent bulb fixtures.
  - c. Plumbing - The original porcelain plumbing fixtures still remain in the building.
  - d. Misc. -

D. Site

- 1. General Setting and Orientation: The front of the building faces south. It is located in an area of mixed uses; the neighborhood is predominantly residential with some commercial and industrial activity. One block east of the school are the railroad tracks.
- 2. Historic Landscape Design: There is a limited amount of landscaping around the front entryway; it is of no historic significance. The rest of the building is surrounded by parking lot.
- 3. Outbuildings: There are no remaining outbuildings.

Part III: Sources of Information

A. Original Architectural Drawings

The original architectural drawings are located in the archives of the Shelbyville Central Schools. Copies of some of the drawings are attached.

B. Early Views

Early views of the building are not available.

C. Interviews

Interviews with: Jerome McCall, Director of City Planning for the City of Shelbyville.

D. Bibliography

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources - a) Shelbyville County Courthouse, Shelbyville; b) Shelbyville Central School - Original architectural drawings; c) Shelbyville Planning Division; and d) McLoney/Omni Architects, Lexington, Kentucky.
2. Secondary and Published Sources - Shelbyville News, February 6, 1982 and July 9, 1983.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

F. Supplemental Material

Prepared by: Lauren Blank  
Project Planner  
Proctor-Davis-Ray Engineers, Inc.

Part IV: Project Information

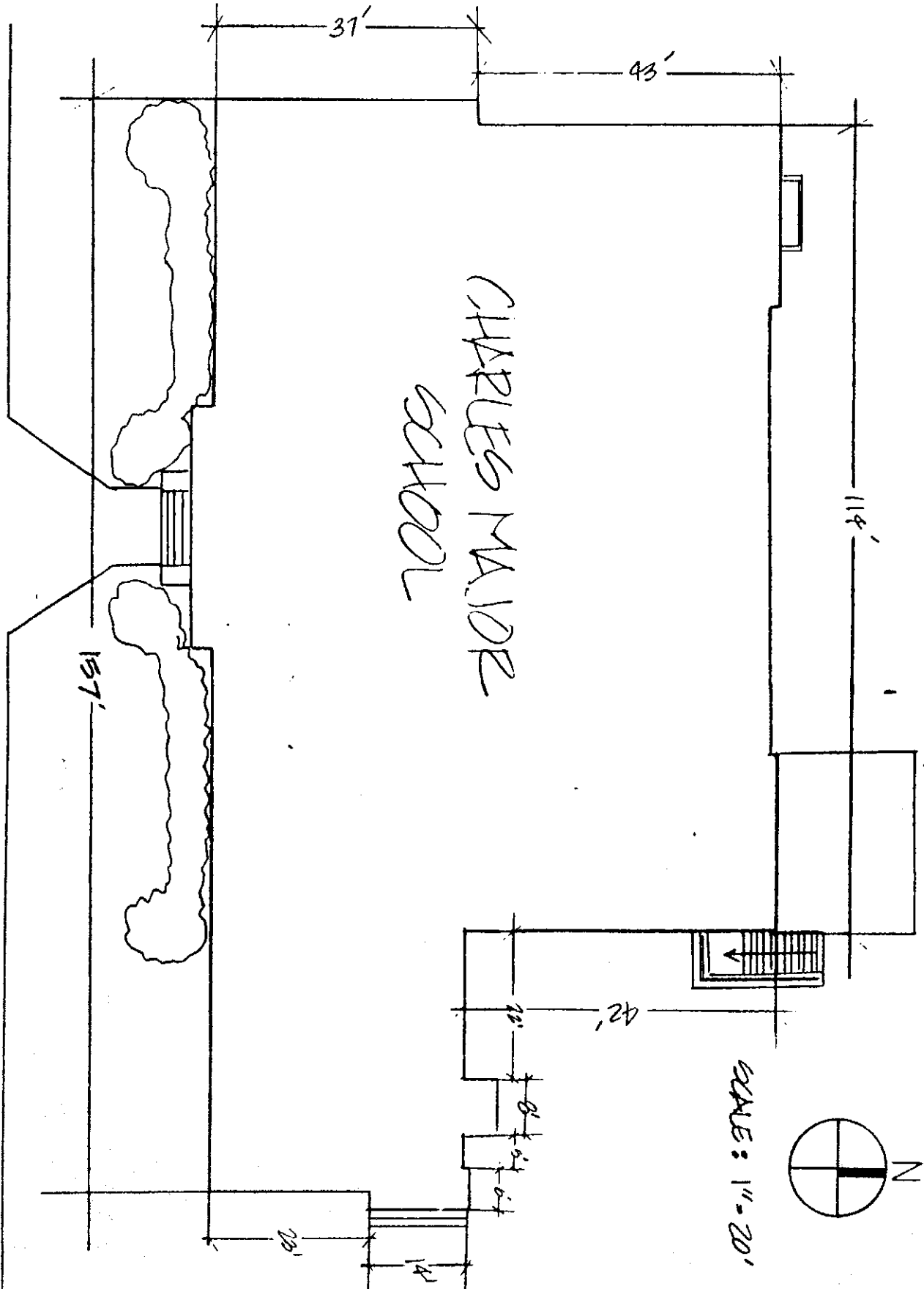
The construction of a five-story low and moderate income senior citizens apartment complex has been planned for the site Charles Major School occupies. The proposed structure will be constructed through the HUD 202 program. A total of 70 units are planned. The project will be undertaken by Retirement Housing Foundation of Los Angeles, James P. Sharer, Director. This company currently has an option to purchase the site from Shelbyville Industries, Inc. There is a demonstrated need for elderly housing in the Shelbyville area.

The City of Shelbyville and Shelby County have the largest elderly population in the State of Indiana outside of Indianapolis and Marion County. There is an extensive waiting list for the other elderly housing complexes in Shelbyville.

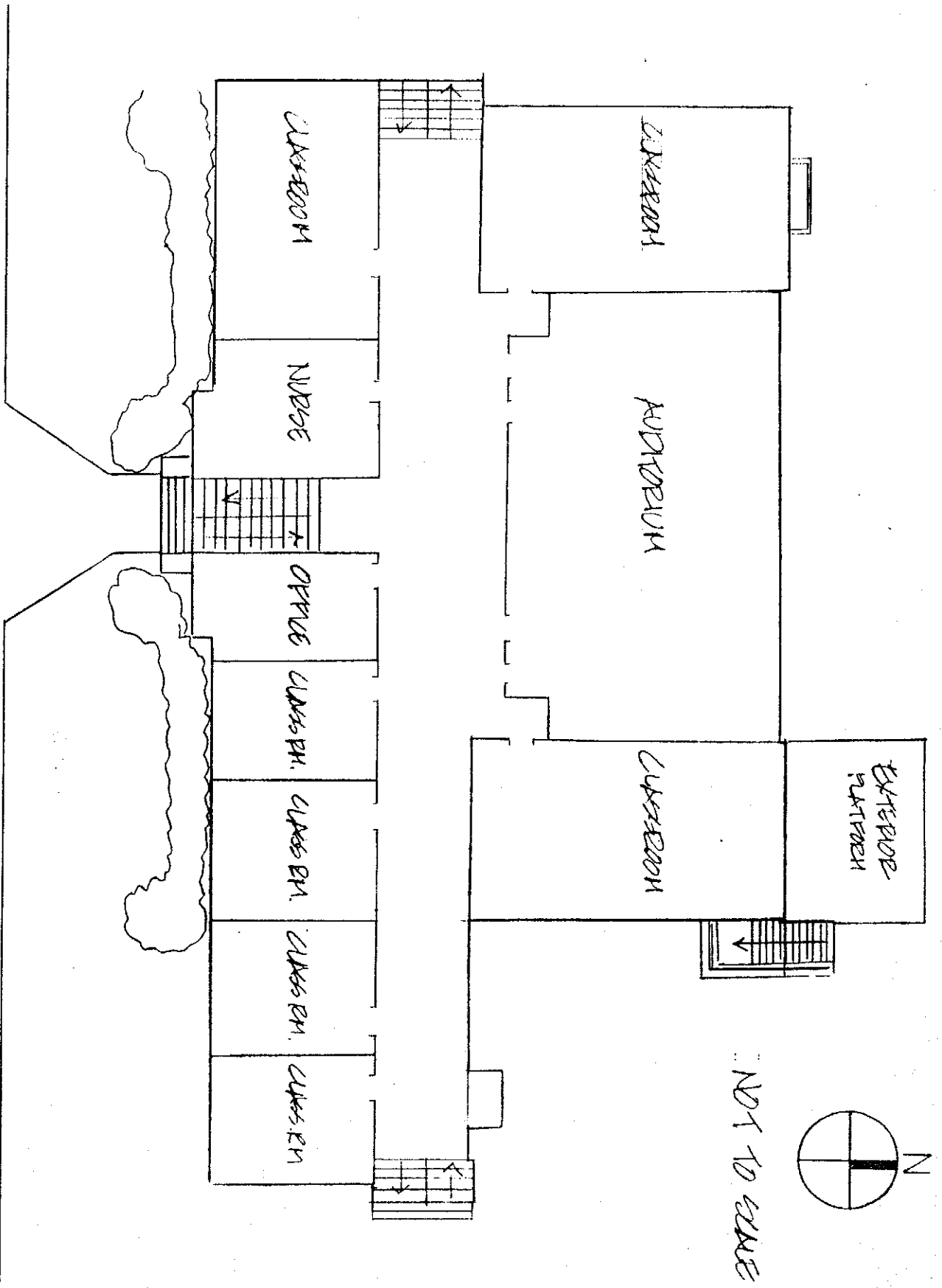
As per the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council, the design of the new elderly housing project will be developed in consultation with the Indiana SHPO to ensure its compatibility with the Shelbyville Commercial Historic District.

FRANKLIN STREET

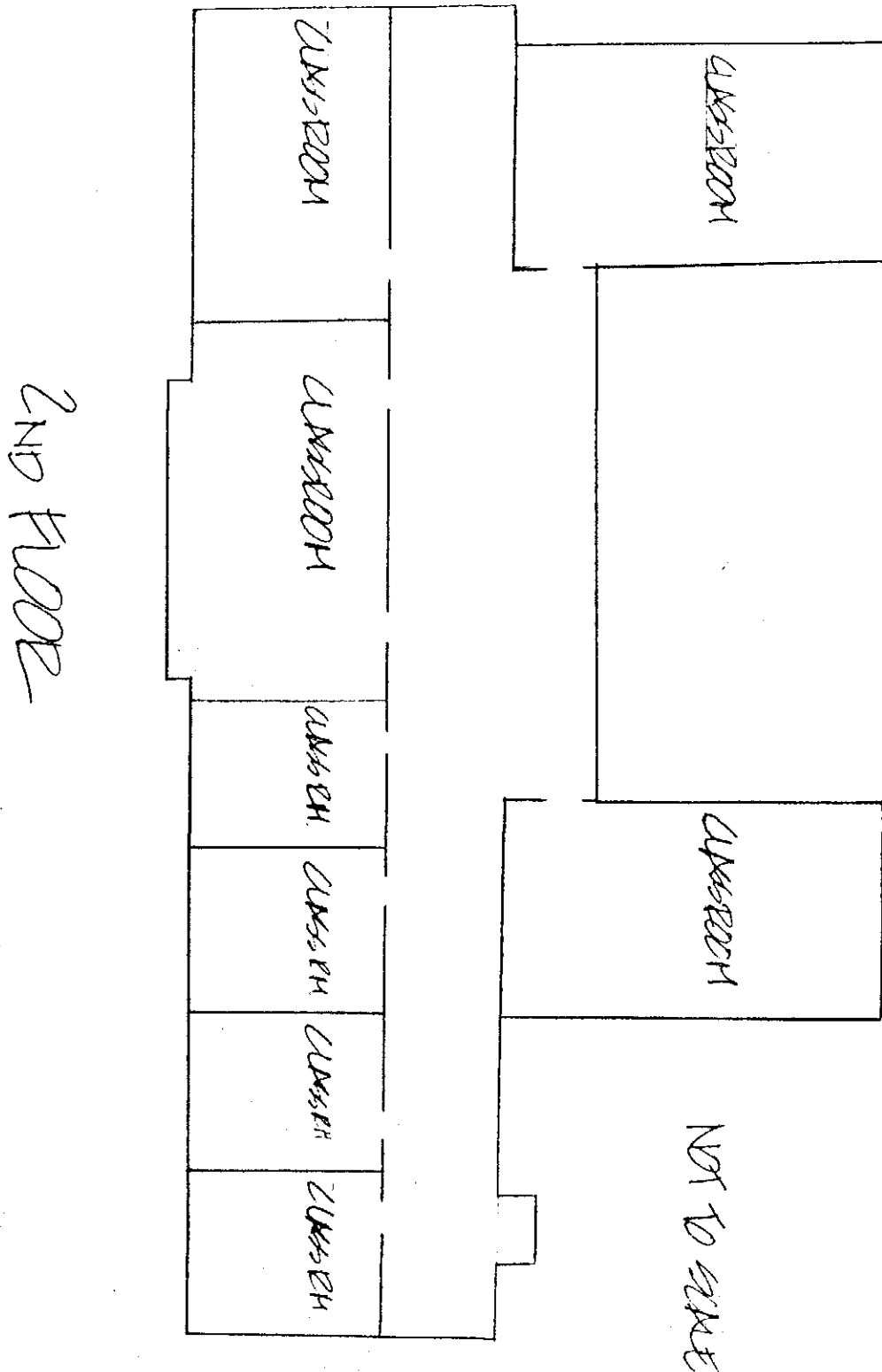
CHARLES MAJOR  
SCHOOL

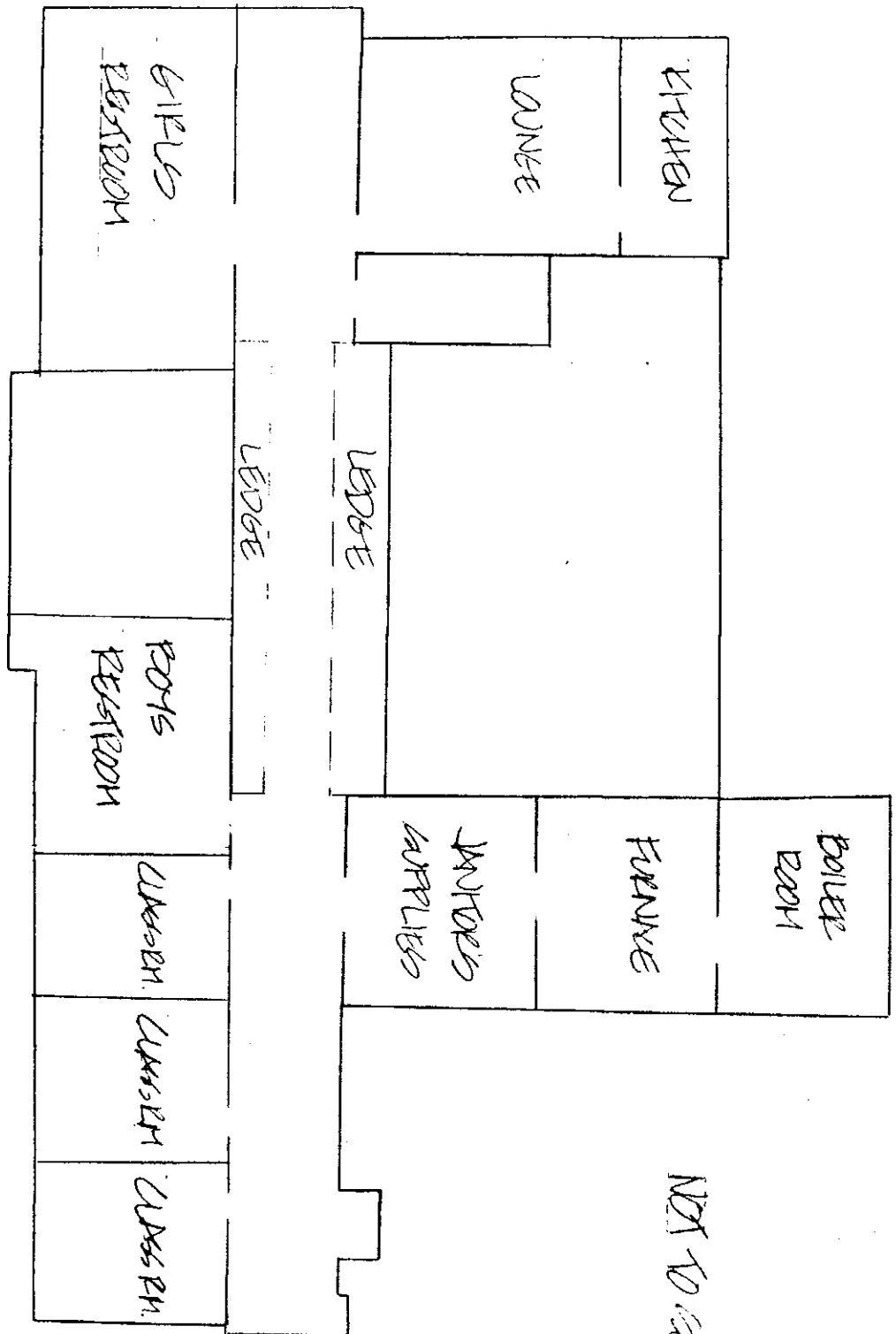






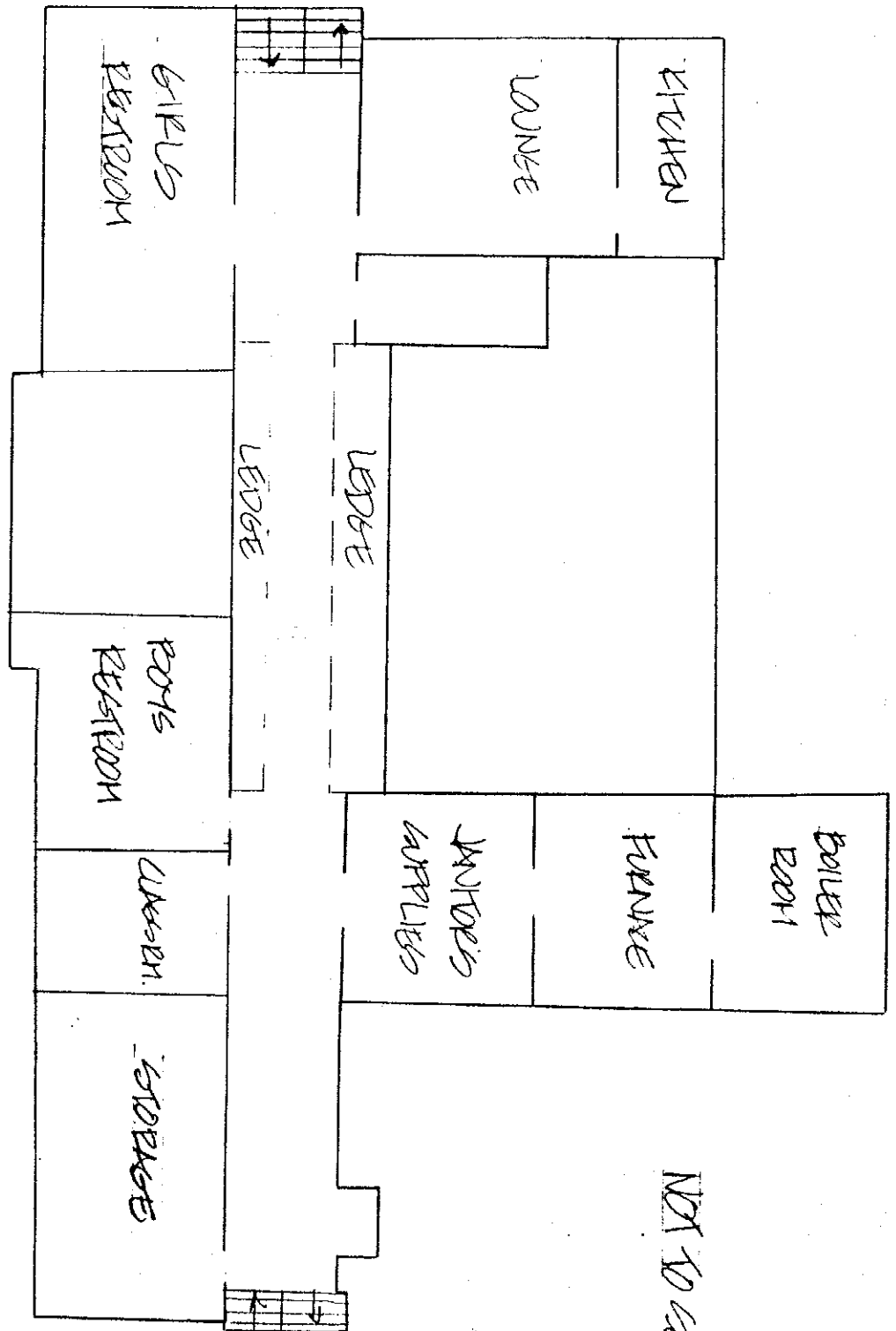
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DEPARTMENT

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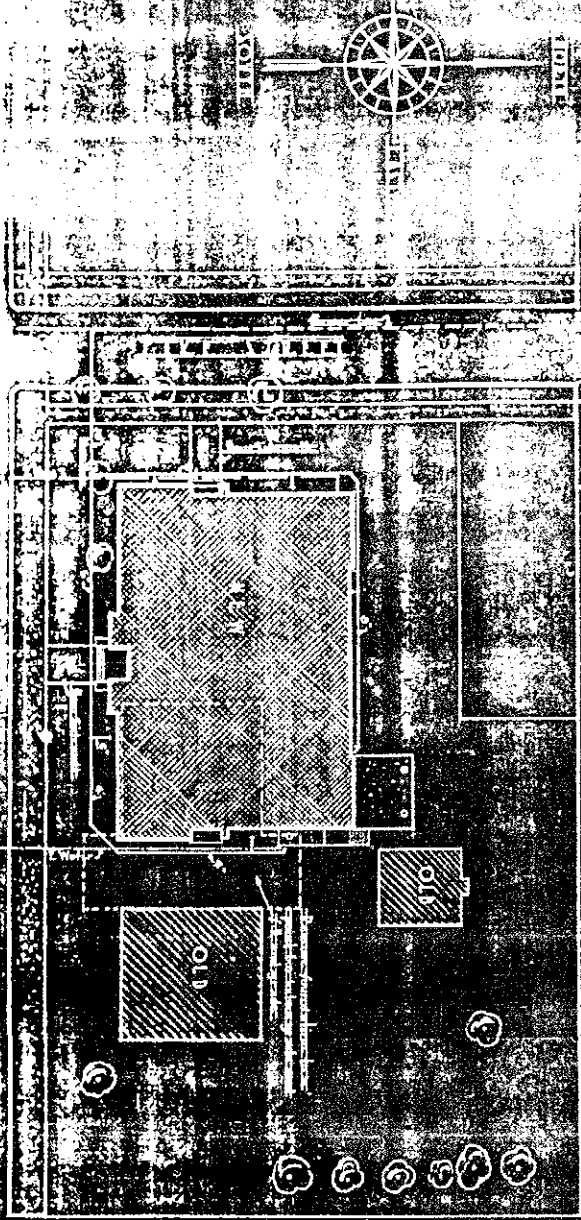
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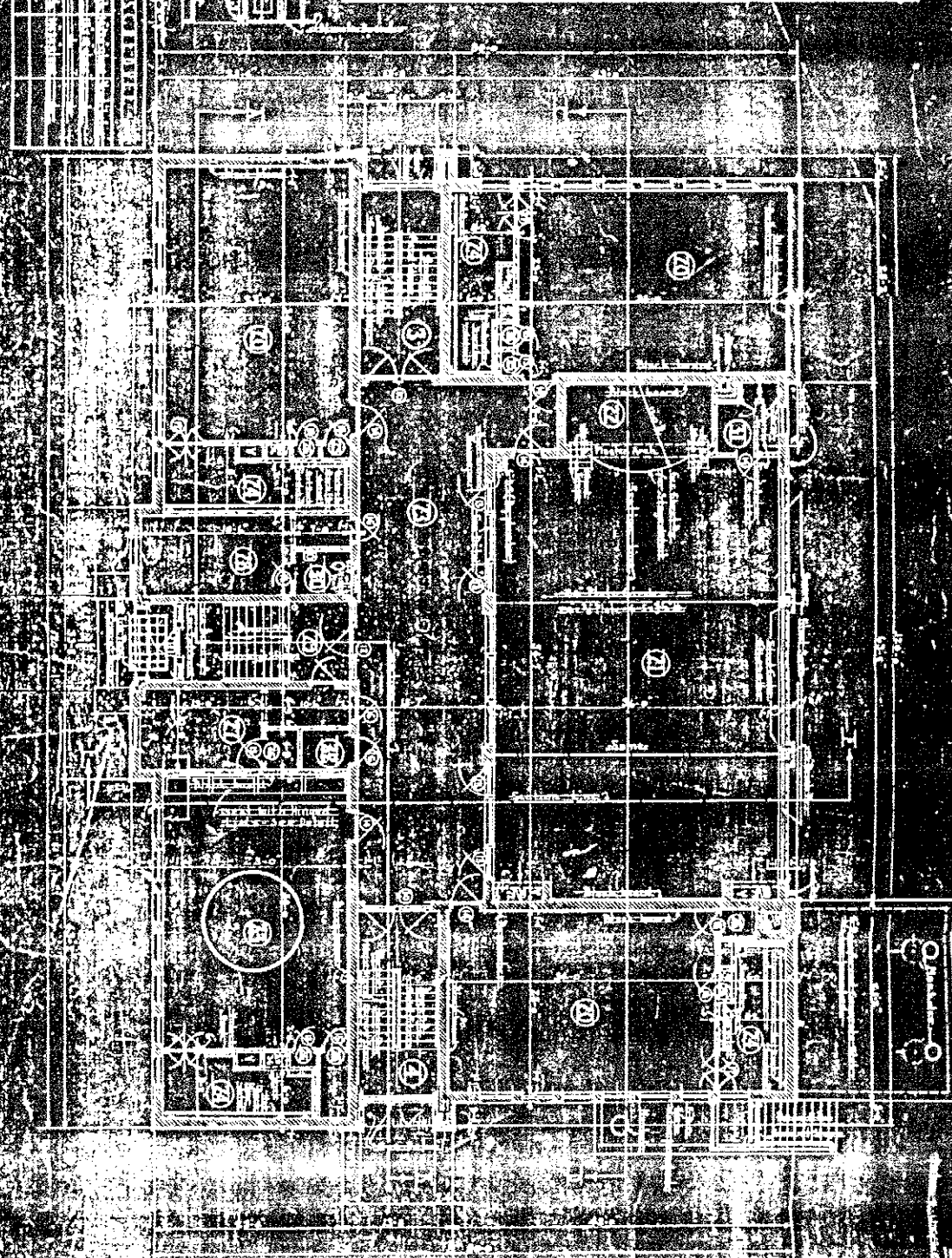
CHARLES MAJOR SCHOOL  
HABS No. IN-201  
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# CHARTER MAJOR SCHOOL

SPRINGFIELD, INDIANA

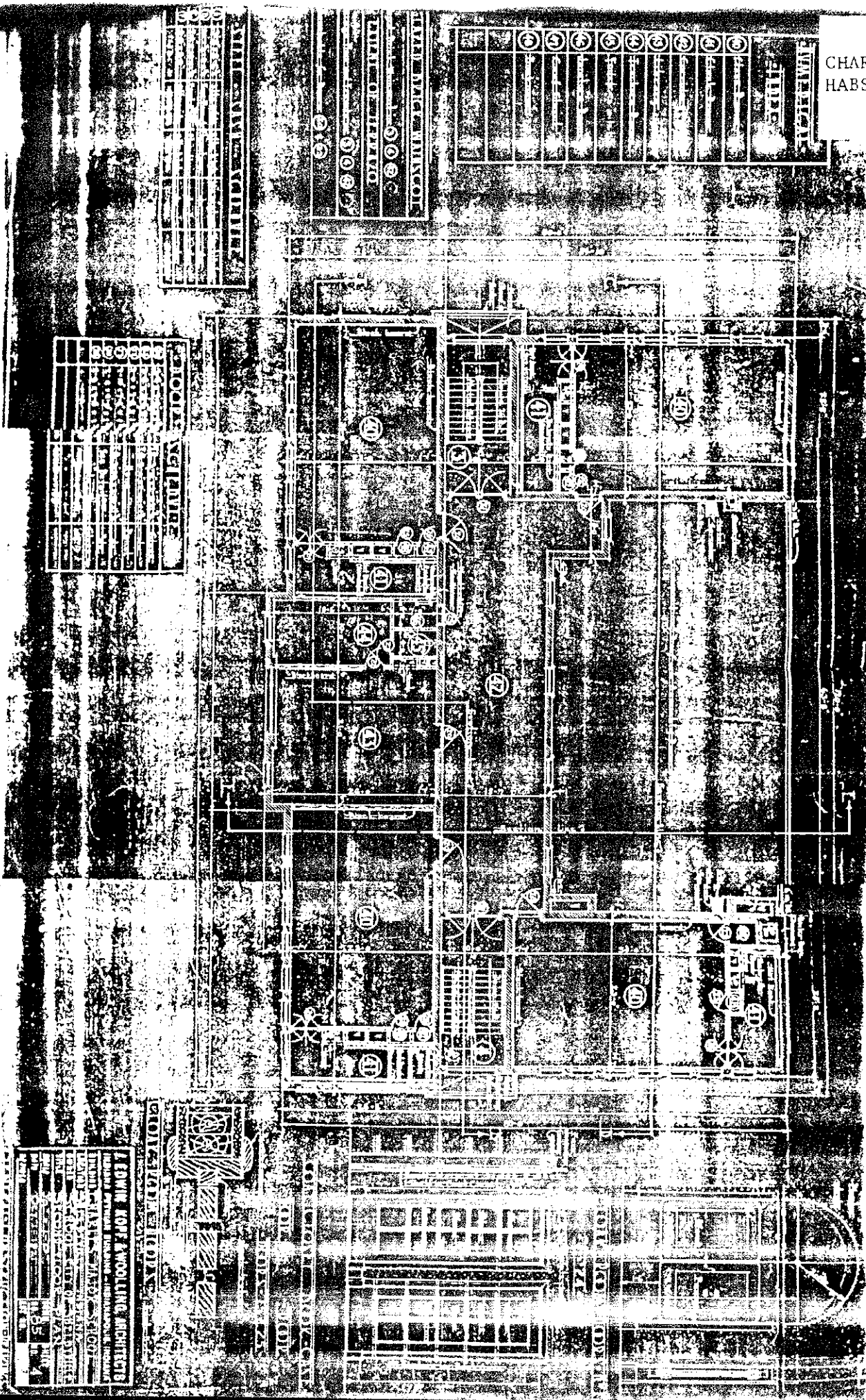
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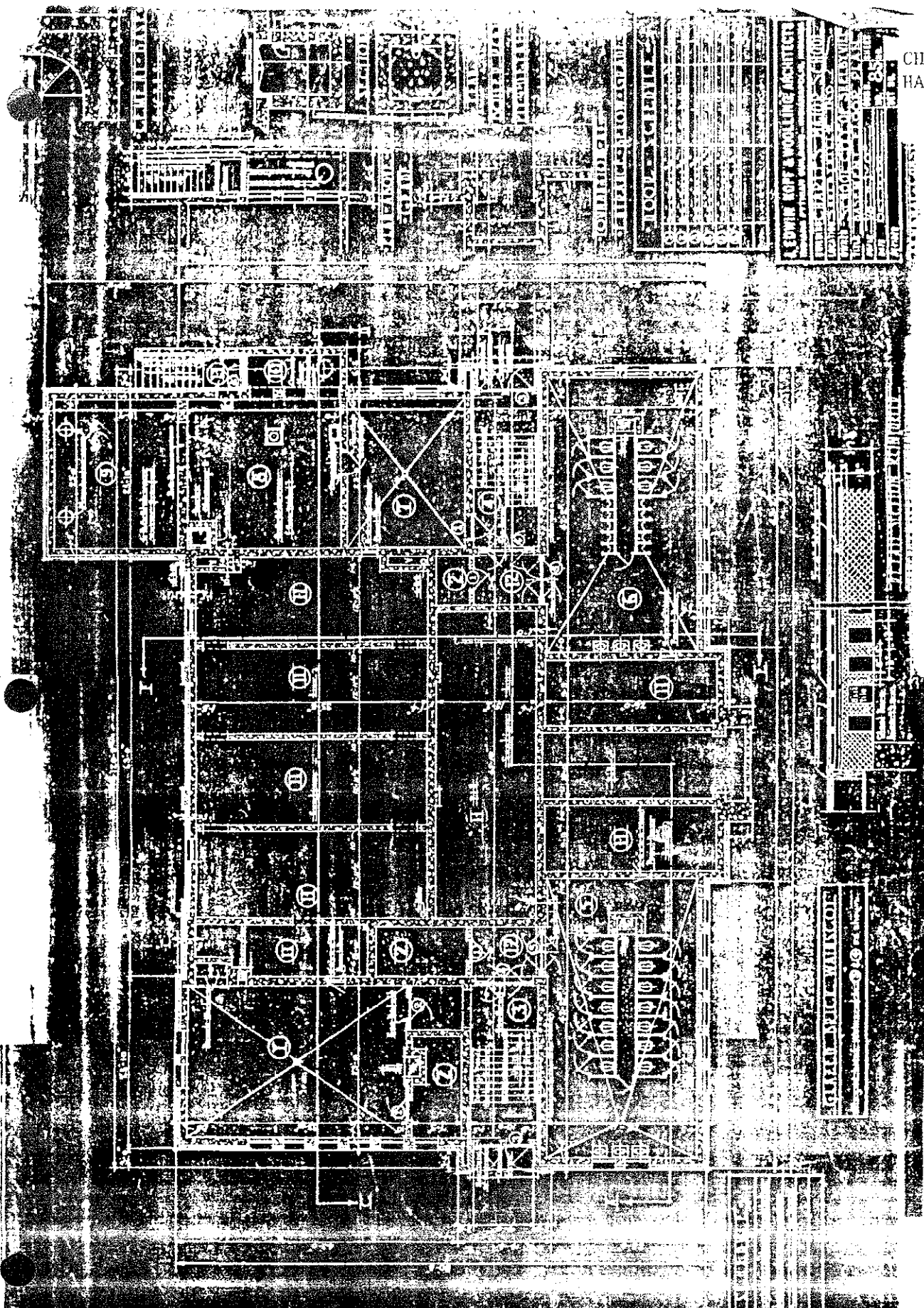


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EDWIN ROY FAWCETT ARCHITECTS  
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DESIGNED BY EDWIN ROY FAWCETT  
DRAWN BY J. H. BROWN  
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**J. EDWIN KOPF & WOOLLING, ARCHITECTS**



